



Photo courtesy of William Folsom, NOAA, NMFS

The Delaware Coastal Programs - Managing our Coastal Resources

For thousands of years, people have been drawn to the world's coastal areas. Today, coastal areas throughout the United States are hubs of commerce, recreation, and tourism. More than half of the nation's population lives near the coast. As the coastal population continues to grow, the health of valuable natural resources, many of which sustain local economies, is increasingly at risk. In Delaware this dynamic area, also known as the Coastal Zone, provides critical habitat for many species including waterfowl, wildlife, fish, and marine mammals. It also provides recreational opportunities, port access, and water resources critical to the State's economy. Managing conflicts between uses of irreplaceable resources is a complex and continuously changing challenge in Delaware.

The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act, first passed in 1972, established state Coastal Zone Management Programs and the National Estuarine Research Reserve system. Thirty-three states and territories across the country have established state Coastal Zone Management Programs for the purpose of managing conflicting uses of coastal resources. Twenty-two states have established twenty-five National Estuarine Research Reserves whose goals are to study and protect estuarine areas. Delaware's programs, the **Delaware Coastal Management Program (DCMP)** and the **Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve (DNERR)** are federal-state partnerships housed within the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Division of Soil and Water Conservation. The DCMP and DNERR work closely with one another to fulfill the mission of each program and together are known as the Delaware Coastal Programs.

For additional information regarding any aspect of the Delaware Coastal Programs, please call (302) 739-3451.

Delaware Coastal Program's Mission

Preserve, protect, develop and where possible restore and enhance the resources of Delaware's coastal zone by effective administration of the Coastal Management program and the National Estuarine Research Reserve.

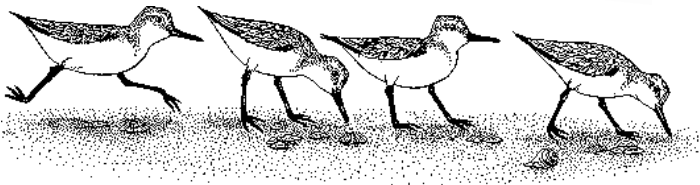
Message from DCP Administrator

Welcome to the first edition of the Delaware Coastal Programs' semi-annual newsletter, *Coastal Delaware*. This newsletter will bring you articles about our component programs, the Delaware Coastal Management Program and the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve. Each newsletter will have articles about Delaware's coastal resources and the research and management projects that are being carried out to better understand, preserve and protect them. In addition, each edition will feature a *Coastal Fact Sheet* that will detail one aspect of our program

Coastal Delaware begins at a very special time – the 30th anniversary of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). In 1972, the U.S. Congress passed this important legislation in recognition that the balanced management of coastal resources is critical to the economic, environmental and social well-being of all Americans. Delaware was one of the first states to develop and receive approval of a Coastal Zone Management Program.

Coastal management deals with many diverse issues ranging from the public's right to coastal access to the preservation and protection of coastal resources for both their inherent values as well as for economic renewal and growth. It is difficult to explain fully what coastal management is all about, so we have developed a brief saying – “*coastal management is about conflict resolution*”. As you peruse this newsletter, you will see how true this statement is by learning about coastal issues and the challenges of coastal management in Delaware.

Sarah H. Cooksey



The Delaware Coastal Management Program, established in 1979, is charged with managing the conflicting uses of the state's coastal resources from public access to habitat preservation and enhancement to port development.

The DCMP has three base programs: Federal Consistency, Coastal Nonpoint and Special Area Management Planning. Federal Consistency is a program that allows a state to review development activities that could have an affect on the state's coastal zone (see Coastal Fact Sheet # 1 for more detailed information). The Coastal Nonpoint Program works with several state and federal agencies to manage and find solutions for problems associated with nonpoint source pollution, a major issue in many watersheds in Delaware. Special Area Management Planning is a unique tool that Coastal Management Programs can utilize to address environmental or resource challenges that span political boundaries or require the cooperation of diverse groups of people to solve.

In addition to these three base programs, the DCMP undertakes other projects each year that target information or management for high-priority concerns or issues that affect the state's coastal resources. In addition, many projects are carried out cooperatively with the DNERR. Recent examples include:

- ◆ Developing tools to help conservation planners prevent erosion and water pollution with riparian buffers.
- ◆ Investigating ways to improve Delaware Bay beach replenishment projects to maximize their potential for the restoration of critical horseshoe crab and shorebird habitat.
- ◆ Developing and monitoring new technologies to mitigate water quality problems causing fish kills in Delaware's Inland Bays.
- ◆ Providing detailed geographic information system analysis and support to develop a new setback line, which will be needed for an update of Delaware's Regulations Governing the Use of Beaches.
- ◆ Determining the consequences and limiting the impacts of land development and sustaining coastal ecosystems.
- ◆ Assisting local governments conduct habitat restoration and resource planning projects as part of Governor Minner's Livable Delaware Initiative.

The Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve, established in 1993 under section 315 of the Coastal Zone Management Act, is the twenty-second of twenty-five National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs) across the country. The mission of DNERR is to establish, protect, and manage natural estuarine habitats for research and education.

Research

The DNERR Research Program performs estuarine monitoring, sponsors a graduate research fellowship program, and supports and coordinates specific targeted research regarding coastal and estuarine problems to assist the Delaware Coastal Management Program in developing management strategies.

Delaware's System-Wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) is part of the NERR national monitoring plan to measure changes in estuarine water quality and in habitat and land use. Water quality data is currently being collected continuously at four locations, with plans for expansion. Weather data is also collected. The short and long term data gathered through the SWMP will provide information about how estuaries function and change naturally over time, enabling scientists to predict how these systems will respond to changes in climate and human-induced changes.

The NERRS Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) Program offers two qualified master's and doctoral students per year the opportunity to address scientific questions of local, regional, and national significance. While graduate research fellows receive hands-on experience, reserve managers and coastal decision-makers receive vital ecological data.



Reserve's weatherstation located on the boardwalk.



Education program touring the Reserve's boardwalk lead by Education Coordinator, Katy Lamborn.

Education

The Education Program is aimed at increasing environmental ethics among natural and coastal resource users. By translating research into a format usable to coastal decision-makers and other users, it provides a critical and often absent link between research, management, and education.

The Coastal Training Program (CTP) and Coastal Decision-Maker Workshops (CDMWs) are the two aspects of the Education Program that are essential to providing current environmental information to those who make decisions affecting coastal resources. The CDMWs have proven to be an effective way to pass along scientific information regarding various environmental "high priority concerns" to elected government officials, policy-makers, and the public. The CTP is a new program that will build upon and expand this highly successful program. It will significantly increase the DNERR's ability to provide coastal resource management guidance to those who can use it most effectively for protecting Delaware's fragile resources.

The DNERR offers public programs ranging from boat trips along the St. Jones River to interpretive events. These free events are published quarterly in the Reserve's Public Program Brochure. School field trip experiences and outreach programs that correlate to state content standards in math, science, social studies, and language arts are also offered. The DNERR also has an active volunteer organization known as "The Friends of the St. Jones Reserve." Volunteers assist with events such as horseshoe crab spawning surveys, landscaping, public outreach, and education programs.

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